

96-00377860-00377864

DAILY NEWS

World

US soldier kidnapped by the Taliban is 23-year-old Army paratrooper Bowe Bergdahl

BY STEPHANIE GASKELL / DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2009 2:02 PM



The family of Private First Class Bowe Bergdahl released the above photo.

The U.S. soldier captured by the Taliban is a 23-year-old Army paratrooper from Idaho on his first deployment to Afghanistan, Pentagon officials said Sunday.

Private 1st Class Bowe Bergdahl, who joined the Army just last year, was shown pleading for his life on a video released by his captors Saturday night.

"Please, please bring us home so that we can be back where we belong and not over here, wasting our time and our lives," said a terrified Bergdahl, who appears to be in good condition. He is shown with his head shaved, eating and wearing local garb and said the date was July 14.

"To my fellow Americans who have loved ones over here, who know what it's like to miss them, you have the power to make our government bring them home," he said.



This frame grab taken from a Taliban propaganda video shows an American soldier who went missing from his base in eastern Afghanistan on June 30, 2009. (Watch the video below.)

RELATED: 'YOU WILL BE HUNTED' IF WE DON'T GET OUR SOLDIER, U.S. TELLS TALIBAN

Military officials said Bergdahl, who went missing from a small combat outpost in southeastern Afghanistan on June 30, is a paratrooper with the 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division in Fort Richardson, Alaska. The unit deployed to Afghanistan in March.

Bergdahl's family, who were notified of his capture shortly after he went missing, broke their silence Sunday and released a heart-wrenching statement to the media.

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"We hope and pray for our son's safe return to his comrades and then to our family and we appreciate all the support and expressions of sympathy shown to us by our family members, our friends and others across the nation. Thank you and please keep Bowe in your thoughts and prayers," the family said.

In the 28-minute video, first shown on a Taliban web site, one of his captors holds Bergdahl's dog tags up to the camera - his name and rank clearly visible - and prompts him to answer questions.

RELATED: CAPTURED U.S. SOLDIER WAS 'SOLD' TO LOCAL INSURGENT GROUP

"Well, I'm scared," he said. "Scared I won't be able to go home. It is very unnerving to be a prisoner."

Bergdahl choked up as he talked about his family and his girlfriend.

"I have my girlfriend, who is hoping to marry," he said. "I have my grandma and grandpas. I have a very, very good family that I love back home in America. And I miss them every day when I'm gone. I miss them and I'm afraid that I might not ever see them again and that I'll never be able to tell them that I love them again and I'll never be able to hug them."

Bergdahl also talks about his desire to learn more about Islam and the morale of American soldiers, which he said was low.

RELATED: DESPERATE SEARCH FOR CAPTURED SOLDIER CONTINUES

It is unclear where Bergdahl is being held. He was captured in Paktika province, a stronghold of the Haqqani network, a particularly brutal group of terrorists with ties to al Qaeda that operates freely along both sides of the border with Pakistan.

Last week, Taliban commanders said Bergdahl would be killed if U.S. forces didn't withdraw from Ghanzi and Paktika provinces in southeastern Afghanistan, but did not release any images or video of him.

On Sunday, a Taliban spokesman told Reuters that the video was proof that the soldier was in their custody.

"He is fine and healthy as you saw in the video tape," the spokesman said. "We will decide in the future as to what needs to be done with him."

U.S. military officials condemned the video as propaganda and vowed to find Bergdahl.

"We strongly condemn this public exploitation and humiliation of a prisoner. It's a violation of the international law of war and we will continue to use all resources available to us to return this soldier to safety," said U.S. military spokesman Col. Gregory Julian in Kabul.

U.S. troops have blanketed the area with two flyers. One of them asked the Afghan people for information on the missing soldier and offered a \$25,000 reward for his return. The other was aimed at insurgents and shows two U.S. soldiers knocking down a door, with the message: "Please return our soldier safely (or) we will hunt you."

sgaskell@nydailynews.com

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The Salt Lake Tribune

Soldier held in Afghanistan is from Idaho

BY JOHN MILLER

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

PUBLISHED JULY 19, 2009 12:03 AM

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Hailey, Idaho » A soldier from Idaho who disappeared from his base in Afghanistan has been captured, the Pentagon confirmed Sunday, a day after he was seen in a Taliban video posted online.

The Defense Department released the name of Pfc. Bowe (pronounced BOW) R. Bergdahl, 23, who was serving with an Alaska-based infantry regiment. The private was last seen walking away from his base near the border with Pakistan in an area known to be a Taliban stronghold.

Even before his name became public, two U.S. defense officials confirmed to *The Associated Press* that the man in that 28-minute video was the captured soldier. The video, in which Bergdahl said he was "scared I won't be able to go home," provided the first public glimpse of the missing American.

The Pentagon statement said Bergdahl's whereabouts became unknown on July 1 and his status was changed July 3 to missing-captured.

It wasn't clear who initially captured Bergdahl, but the U.S. command in Afghanistan said he was being held by the Taliban and condemned the video as a violation of international law.

"I'm glad to see he appears unharmed, but again, this is a Taliban propaganda video," spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Christine Sidenstricker said. "They are exploiting the soldier in violation of international law."

Bob Bergdahl, the soldier's father, told *The Associated Press* on Saturday that the family was requesting media respect their privacy.

"We hope and pray for our son's safe return to his comrades and then to our family, and we appreciate all the support and expressions of sympathy shown to us by our family members, our friends and others across the nation," Bob Bergdahl said in a statement issued through the Department of Defense. "Thank you, and please continue to keep Bowe in your thoughts and prayers."

On the video, which was posted on a Web site pointed out by the Taliban, Bergdahl says he is from Hailey, Idaho, a town of about 7,000 people that lies 160 miles east of Boise. The Pentagon identified his hometown as Ketchum, which is about half the size of Hailey and about 12 miles north. His family says he grew up in Blaine County, closer to Hailey.

Before enlisting, Bergdahl worked as a barista at a coffee shop in Hailey, Zaney's River Street Coffee House, where a sign on the counter encouraged patrons to keep Bergdahl in their thoughts and prayers.

"Join all of us at Zaney's holding light for our friend Bowe Bergdahl. Bowe has been captured in Afghanistan," the handwritten sign says.

A similar message posted July 8 on the coffee shop's Facebook page suggests many in the small town have known for some time that Bergdahl was in danger.

Friends and former co-workers at the coffee shop declined to speak on the record Sunday to an *Associated Press* reporter, saying they were abiding by the Bergdahl family's wishes for privacy.

One of the directors of the Sun Valley Ballet School in Ketchum said Bergdahl performed with the group for four or five years up to about 2008.

"He's athletic," Jill Brennan said. "He just had a knack for it. He's a wonderful young man."

In the video, Bergdahl had his head shaved and was seen with the start of a beard. He was sitting and dressed in a nondescript, gray outfit. Early in the video one captor held the soldier's dog tag up to the camera. His name and ID number were clearly visible. He was shown eating at one point and sitting cross-legged.

He said the date was July 14 and that he was captured when he lagged behind on a patrol. It's clear the video was made no earlier than July 14 because Bergdahl repeated an exaggerated Taliban claim about a Ukrainian helicopter that was shot down that day.

He was interviewed in English by his captors. He was asked his views on the war, which he called extremely hard; his desire to learn more about Islam; and the morale of American soldiers, which he said was low.

Asked how he was doing, the soldier said: "Well I'm scared, scared I won't be able to go home. It is very unnerving to be a prisoner."

He later choked up when discussing his family and his hope to marry his girlfriend.

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"I have a very, very good family that I love back home in America. And I miss them every day when I'm gone," he said.

He was prompted by his interrogators to give a message to the American people.

"To my fellow Americans who have loved ones over here, who know what it's like to miss them, you have the power to make our government bring them home," he said. "Please, please bring us home so that we can be back where we belong and not over here, wasting our time and our lives and our precious life that we could be using back in our own country. Please bring us home. It is America and American people who have that power."

Bergdahl is a member of 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, based at Fort Richardson, Alaska.

On July 2, the U.S. military said an American soldier had disappeared after walking off his base in eastern Afghanistan with three Afghan counterparts and was believed to have been taken prisoner.

Details of such incidents are routinely held very tightly by the military as it works to retrieve a missing or captured soldier without giving away any information to captors.

But Afghan Police Gen. Nabi Mullakheil said the soldier went missing in eastern Paktika province near the border with Pakistan from an American base. The region is known to be Taliban-infested.

Afghans in contact with the Taliban told the AP that the soldier was held by a Taliban group led by a commander called Maulvi Sangin, who operates in the area where the American was reported missing. They said the fighters initially planned to smuggle the soldier across the border into Pakistan but ruled that out because of U.S. missile strikes and Pakistani bombing attacks against militant targets in the area. Instead, they decided to move him north into Taliban-controlled areas of Ghazni province.

The Afghans spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of arrest or reprisal. It was impossible to independently confirm their information.

A brigade commander for the Afghan national army in southeastern Afghanistan, Gen. Asrar Ahmad Khan, said Afghan and coalition forces have been working together for 15 days searching for the missing soldier.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahid, said the militants holding the soldier haven't yet set any conditions for his release.

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Bowe Bergdahl

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Bowe Robert Bergdahl (born March 28, 1986) is a United States Army soldier who has been in the captivity of the Taliban-aligned Afghanistan Haqqani network since June 2009.^{[2][3][4]}

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Early life

Bergdahl was born on March 28, 1986 in Sun Valley, Idaho.

Military status and disappearance

Bergdahl was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, based at Fort Richardson, Alaska.^[5] During his unit's normal deployment rotation to Afghanistan, he went missing on June 30, 2009, near the town of Yahya Khel in the Paktika Province, which is in the south-east of Afghanistan, right on the border to Pakistan. The area in which Bergdahl was captured is right next to Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

He is believed to be held by the Haqqani network, an insurgent group affiliated with the Taliban, probably somewhere in Pakistan.^[6]

Since then, the Taliban has released five videos showing him in captivity. The Taliban originally demanded \$1 million^[7] and the release of 21 Afghan prisoners and Aafia Siddiqui in exchange for Bergdahl's release. They threatened to execute Bergdahl if Siddiqui was not released. Most of the Afghan prisoners are being held at Guantanamo Bay.^{[8][9]} The Taliban later reduced its demand to five Taliban prisoners in exchange for Bergdahl's release.^[10]

Bowe Robert Bergdahl



| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Born | March 28, 1986 <div>Sun Valley, Idaho, U.S.</div> |
| Allegiance | United States of America |
| Service/branch | United States Army |
| Years of service | 2008–present ^[1] |
| Rank | Sergeant (promoted in absentia) |
| Unit | 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division |
| Battles/wars | War in Afghanistan |

Bergdahl was a Private First Class (E-3) when captured. In June 2010, he was promoted to Specialist (E-4)^[11] and to Sergeant (E-5) on June 17, 2011.^[12]

Capture

On July 18, 2009, the Taliban released a video showing the captured Bergdahl.^[2] In the video, Bergdahl appeared downcast and frightened. A Department of Defense statement issued on July 19 confirmed that Bergdahl was declared "missing/whereabouts unknown" on July 1, and his status was changed to "missing/captured" on July 3.^[13] In the 28-minute video his captors held up his dog tags to establish that the captured man was Bergdahl.^[2] Bergdahl gave the date as July 14 and mentioned an attack that occurred that day.^{[14][15][16]}

Accounts of his capture differ. The version offered by Bergdahl, in the video, is that he was captured when he fell behind on a patrol.^[2] CNN, in its report, cites both Taliban and U.S. military sources, the former alleging he was ambushed after becoming drunk off base, and the latter denying that claim stating: "The Taliban are known for lying and what they are claiming (is) not true."^[4] Other sources said Bergdahl walked off his base after his shift.^[17] A Department of Defense spokesperson, Lieutenant Commander Christine Sidenstricker, said, "I'm glad to see he appears unharmed, but again, this is a Taliban propaganda video. They are exploiting the soldier in violation of international law."^{[2][3]}

According to the Associated Press, General Nabi Mullakheil of the Afghan National Police said the capture occurred in Paktika Province.^[2] Their other sources inform them that he was captured by a Taliban group led by Maulvi Sangin, who has moved him to Ghazni Province. *The Guardian* quoted sources who speculated about the increased difficulty of a rescue mission if Bergdahl had been smuggled across the nearby border into Pakistan.^[3]

CNN described two Pashto-language leaflets the U.S. military was distributing in seeking Bergdahl.^[4] One showed a smiling GI shaking hands with Afghan children, with a caption that called him a guest in Afghanistan. The other showed a door being broken down, and threatened that those holding Bergdahl would be hunted down.

In December 2009, five months after Bergdahl's disappearance, the media arm of the Afghan Taliban announced the release of a new video of "a U.S. soldier captured in Afghanistan," titled "One of Their People Testified." In the announcement the Taliban did not name the American, but the only U.S. soldier known to be in captivity is Bergdahl. U.S. military officials have been searching for Bergdahl, but it is not publicly known whether he is even being held in Afghanistan or in neighboring Pakistan, an area off-limits to U.S. forces based in Afghanistan.^[18] On December 25, another video was released that shows Bergdahl in a combat uniform and helmet.^{[19][20]} He described his place of birth, deployment to Afghanistan and subsequent capture. He then made several statements regarding his humane treatment by his captors, contrasting this to the abuses suffered by insurgents in prisons. He finished by saying that America should not be in Afghanistan and that its presence there is just another Vietnam. On April 7, 2010, the Taliban released a third video of Bergdahl, now with a full head of hair and a beard, pleading for the release of Afghan prisoners held at Guantanamo and Bagram.^{[21][22]} In November 2010, Bergdahl appeared briefly in a fourth video.^[23] In May 2011, Bergdahl appeared briefly in a fifth video.^[24]

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In December 2011, it was reported that Bergdahl tried to escape three months earlier but was recaptured after three days.^[25]

In June 2013, Bergdahl's parents received a letter from him through the Red Cross.^[26]

Threat of reprisal

On February 4, 2010, the Afghan Taliban demanded the release of Aafia Siddiqui, a Pakistani scientist who was convicted by a U.S. court on charges of attempting to murder U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, and threatened to execute Bergdahl if their demand was not met.^{[27][28]} The Taliban claimed that members of Siddiqui's family had requested their assistance.

Reports of joining the Taliban

Fox News reported in August 2010 that a Taliban commander named Haji Nadeem said Bergdahl was helping to train the Taliban in bomb making and infantry tactics. The Pentagon dismissed the reports as Taliban propaganda.^{[29][30]}

Release efforts

The missing serviceman's fate is tied up in U.S. efforts to broker a peace deal between the Taliban and the Afghan government, a high-level, high-risk diplomatic initiative which appeared to be on the cusp of a breakthrough before the Taliban suspended preliminary talks in March 2012. For months, U.S. negotiators were seeking to arrange the transfer of five Taliban detainees held at Guantanamo Bay military prison to the Gulf state of Qatar. The transfer was intended as one of a series of confidence-building measures designed to open the door to political talks between the Taliban and Afghan President Hamid Karzai's government.^[31] That move - at the center of U.S. strategy for ending the long, costly conflict in Afghanistan - was also supposed to lead directly to Bowe's release. The Taliban has consistently called for the United States to release those held at Guantanamo Bay in exchange for freeing Western prisoners. But the Guantanamo transfer proposal, which would have required notification to Congress, ground to a halt when the Taliban rejected U.S. conditions designed to ensure transferred Taliban would not slip away and re-emerge as military leaders. The Obama administration has since become pessimistic that any such peace deal with the Taliban will occur before the bulk of NATO forces leave in 2014.^[32]

See also

- Ahmed Kousay Altaie, United States Army – The last American serviceman missing in Iraq. His remains were recovered in February 2012.
- Michael Scott Speicher – A United States Navy F/A-18 Hornet pilot shot down in the Gulf War whose status became the subject of uncertainty and headlines, and whose death was not confirmed until August 2, 2009, after positive identification of his remains after they were discovered near his crash site.

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Categories: 1986 births Living people People from Sun Valley, Idaho

American military personnel of the War in Afghanistan (2001–present) American prisoners of war

United States Army soldiers War in Afghanistan (2001–present) prisoners of war

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Family pleas for captive US soldier's release

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AP

By Jim Heintz And Amir Shah, Associated Press Writers

KABUL — The Taliban released a video Friday of an American soldier captured in Afghanistan, showing him apparently healthy but spouting criticism about the U.S. military operation.

In Idaho, Pfc. Bowe Bergdahl's family pleaded on Christmas Day for his release and urged him to "stay strong."

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Bergdahl disappeared June 30 while based in eastern Afghanistan and is the only known American serviceman in captivity. The Taliban claimed his capture in a video released in mid-July that showed the young Idaho soldier appearing downcast and frightened. He hadn't been heard from until Friday's video, in which he looks well and speaks clearly.

This is an image from video made available by IntelCenter shows a video frame grab from the Taliban propaganda video released Friday Dec. 25, 2009 purportedly showing U.S. soldier Pfc. Bowe Bergdahl, 23, of Ketchum Idaho who was captured more than five months ago in eastern Afghanistan. It could not be confirmed immediately that it was Bergdahl in the new video, which was released to The Associated Press and other news organizations. The man identifies himself as Bergdahl, born in Sun Valley, Idaho, and gives his rank, birth date, blood type, his unit and mother's maiden name before beginning a lengthy verbal attack on the U.S. conduct of the war in Afghanistan and its relations with Muslims. (AP Photo/via IntelCenter) IntelCenter Logo must not be cropped NO SALES

Although the video was released Friday, it was unclear when it was made, and NATO spokesman Col. Wayne Shanks told The New York Times it was not evidence that Bergdahl is still alive.

He suggested the video may be a pastiche of clips from earlier this year.

"We are not using this as a proof-of-life video," Shanks told the newspaper. "It's still to be determined when it was made, but it could have been made even several months ago. It has a lot of editing pieces."

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force confirmed hours later that the man in the video was Bergdahl, but denounced both its timing and content.

"This is a horrible act which exploits a young soldier, who was clearly compelled to read a prepared statement," said a statement from U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Gregory Smith, ISAF's spokesman. "To release this video on Christmas Day is an affront to the deeply concerned family and friends of Bowe Bergdahl, demonstrating contempt for religious traditions and the teachings of Islam."

Lt. Col. Tim Marsano of the Idaho National Guard issued a statement Friday from the family of Bergdahl, who live outside Hailey, Idaho. In their statement, the family urged the captors "to let our only son come home."

And to their son, the family said, "We love you and we believe in you. Stay strong."

Marsano met with the family Friday morning at their home. He told the AP that the family had not seen the video but had talked to other relatives who had seen it.

In the video, Bergdahl is shown seated, facing the camera, wearing sunglasses and what appears to be a U.S. military helmet and uniform. On one side of the image, it says: "An American soldier imprisoned by the Mujahideen

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AP Exclusive: Taliban offer to free US soldier Bowe Bergdahl

KATHY GANNON,Associated Press KAY JOHNSON,Associated Press | Posted: Thursday, June 20, 2013 8:36 am

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The Taliban proposed a deal in which they would free a U.S. soldier held captive since 2009 in exchange for five of their most senior operatives at Guantanamo Bay, while Afghan President Hamid Karzai eased his opposition Thursday to joining planned peace talks.

The idea of releasing these Taliban prisoners has been controversial. U.S. negotiators hope they would join the peace process but fear they might simply return to the battlefield, and Karzai once scuttled a similar deal partly because he felt the Americans were usurping his authority.

The proposal to trade U.S. Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl for the Taliban detainees was made by senior Taliban spokesman Shaheen Suhail in response to a question during a phone interview with The Associated Press from the militants' newly opened political office in Doha, the capital of the Gulf nation of Qatar.

The prisoner exchange is the first item on the Taliban's agenda before even starting peace talks with the U.S., said Suhail, a top Taliban figure who served as first secretary at the Afghan Embassy in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad before the Taliban government's ouster in 2001.

"First has to be the release of detainees," Suhail said Thursday when asked about Bergdahl. "Yes. It would be an exchange. Then step by step, we want to build bridges of confidence to go forward."

The Obama administration was noncommittal about the proposal, which it said it had expected the Taliban to make.

"We've been very clear on our feelings about Sgt. Bergdahl and the need for him to be released," State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said. "We have not made a decision to ... transfer any Taliban detainees from Guantanamo Bay, but we anticipate, as I've said, that the Taliban will all raise this issue."

Bergdahl, 27, of Hailey, Idaho, is the only known American soldier held captive from the Afghan war. He disappeared from his base in southeastern Afghanistan on June 30, 2009, and is believed held in Pakistan.

Suhail said Bergdahl "is, as far as I know, in good condition."

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In another town, Iraqis say US killed civilians

By Reuters

06/01/06 -- SAMARRA, Iraq (Reuters) - U.S. forces denied on Wednesday a new accusation, from Iraqi officers, that American troops killed unarmed civilians in their home this month.

Amid mounting public interest in the United States in an inquiry into a suspected massacre at Haditha, the allegations about the deaths of three people at Samarra are among many that Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said this week were trying his patience with the U.S. military's "excuses" over "mistakes".

Iraqi army and police officers and several people who said they were witnesses and relatives of the dead said U.S. soldiers killed two women, aged 60 and 20, and a mentally handicapped man in their home on May 4 after insurgents fired on the troops.

Spokesmen for the 101st Airborne Division, which controls Samarra and Salahaddin province north of Baghdad, said soldiers from its 3rd Brigade Combat Team killed two unnamed men and a woman in a house who had "planned to attack the soldiers".

In an initial statement on May 5, the unit had said troops killed three people who had already fired on them from a roof.

A senior Iraqi police officer from the province's Joint Coordination Center (JCC), a unit that liaises between the U.S. and Iraqi security forces, said: "There was shooting outside the house. Samarra police told us that American soldiers went inside and shot three people, including a mentally handicapped man.

"They were not armed and there were no gunmen in the house," said the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of being targeted by insurgents who routinely kill policemen.

There are frequent disputes over incidents between U.S. military and Iraqi officials in Salahaddin, where the Sunni Arab revolt against occupation and the Shi'ite-led government has been strong. U.S. officers have complained of "disinformation" from police as part of an insurgent campaign to discredit them.

RELATIVES' STATEMENTS

On May 6, Army Colonel Fadhil Muhammed, assistant manager of the JCC, said in a statement: "Multinational forces raided the house of a citizen and killed three people and wounded two from one family at 7 p.m. on May 4." He described the dead as "martyrs", indicating the authorities believed them innocent.

In his family home in the Sikaak district of Samarra, 100 km (60 miles) north of Baghdad, Zedan Khalaf Habib told a Reuters reporter that the soldiers killed his 60-year-old wife, Khairiya Nisiyif Jassim, his son Khaled Zedan Khalaf, 40, who was mentally handicapped, and daughter

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Anaam Zedan Khalaf, 20.

Habib, 66, said he was hit in the arm when soldiers fired from a doorway into a room where 15 people had taken refuge in his house after a gunfight broke out nearby. Another daughter said soldiers placed a rifle next to her brother's body and took photographs to suggest he had been armed when killed.

"I was sitting next to my house when clashes erupted between gunmen and U.S. forces," said Habib, sitting in his home three weeks later. "I went indoors with my family to a safe room."

U.S. soldiers then broke down the door, he said: "Four soldiers stood at the door of the room where we were hiding. There were 15 of us. They started firing. I was shot in the arm and then one of the soldiers dragged me out.

"The firing went on against my family. I was lying face down in another room and they dragged one of my relatives over me."

Habib said he woke from a faint as someone called his name: "It was a policeman. He was crying. The room was full of blood. A few minutes later he showed me the bodies of my relatives.

"They were in black body bags," he said, providing a home video showing the room streaked with blood

"STAGED EVIDENCE"

Shireen, his 36-year-old daughter, said: "After they killed my brother Khaled they shot him three more times in the chest and they put a rifle between his legs to show he was armed and they took a photograph of him."

Asked to comment on the allegation, Master Sergeant Terry Webster of the 101st Airborne said the soldiers came under fire from a rooftop after arresting three people nearby who were suspected of planting roadside bombs:

"The troops suppressed the rooftop fire, entered and cleared the home. Three people in the home, one woman and two men, were killed in the ensuing firefight. A second woman was injured and transported to a nearby hospital," Webster wrote in an e-mail.

"The injured woman confessed that the three people killed had planned to attack the soldiers as they drove by the house.

"No Coalition forces were injured during the engagement."

The unit's initial statement on May 5 said that the three dead were those who had opened fire from the roof: "As the soldiers began to leave the area with the detainees, they came under attack with small arms fire from a nearby rooftop.

"The troops suppressed the rooftop fire and entered and killed the three attackers from the rooftop. An Iraqi citizen was injured during the firefight, but still provided the soldiers with information about the rooftop firers."

The White House pledged on Tuesday to provide full details once investigations are complete into whether Marines killed up to 24 unarmed civilians in Haditha, a Sunni city in the west, and whether they tried to cover it up.

(Additional reporting by Michael Georgy and Alastair Macdonald in Baghdad)

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